



GROWING A ZELKOVA

Bonsai
Trees

Soils
Fertilizer
Sundries

Bonsai Southwest

Pots
Tools

Pre-Bonsai
Suiseki

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Position

Outdoor Zelkovas or acclimatised Zelkovas are hardy to frost though temperatures below -5°C. This can sometimes result in fine branches dying back and root damage so some protection is advised. Frost protection can include placement in darkened outhouses or garage, as when out of leaf Zelkovas do not require light. DO NOT GROW INDOORS.

Watering

Never allow compost to dry out, keep the compost evenly moist. Check the compost daily but only water when necessary.

Water thoroughly with plenty of water allowing it to flow through the soil and flush out stale air and any built up chemical salt deposits.

Watering daily as a routine when it is not required, results in soggy compost which will lead to lack of vigour, root rot and eventually death.

Feeding

Once buds open in Spring, begin to fertilise with a balanced feed every two weeks until late summer. After this use a fertiliser that is lower in nitrogen.

Repotting

In spring as buds fatten up and before they extend. Younger trees may require repotting annually until around ten years old. After that repot as required. Repot in basic soil mix. (2 parts akadama, 1 part pumice.). Don't repot for the sake of it. Repot when the tree has obviously filled the pot with roots or when water will not percolate into the soil and drain freely.

Pruning

Allow shoots to extend 5 or 6 leaves then prune back to 2 leaves as required. Larger-leaved Zelkovas respond well to leaf cutting in Summer. (cut larger leaves in half.)

To thicken the trunk do not prune. Instead, allow shoots to grow out until they stop growing in midsummer then prune back to two outward pointing buds and allow to grow out again.

The last pruning of the season should be after all of the leaves have dropped.

Wiring

In mid-summer though some trees can be wired mid-winter particularly if out of leaf. Care should be taken as bark marks easily.

Pests and diseases

Zelkova bonsai as with all Elm bonsai are not affected by Dutch Elm Disease as the beetle requires the volume of wood only available to it in fully grown mature trees. An attack (if it were to happen) would easily be dealt with by systemic insecticides and fungicides on a potted tree in comparison to the problems associated with eradicating Dutch Elm Disease on a fully-grown tree in the ground.

Mites, caterpillars and aphids, spray at the first signs of attack.

Fungicides can be used on a proactive basis before there is a problem.

A winter wash with lime sulphur will eradicate overwintering pests.

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